

NIH CHILD CARE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

October 26, 2006

Building 45 – Conference Room G

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Valerie Durrant, Tom Hayden, Jayne Lura-Brown, Angela Magliozzi, Richard Morris, Kim Plascjak, Henry Primas, Mary Ellen Savarese, Lisa Strauss, Hilary Fitisilis, Juanita Mildenberg, Susan Persons, Matthew Kohn, Christie Baxter-Espinoza, Tracy Waldeck, Valerie Bonham

Members Absent: Monica Ellerbe-Scott

Liaisons Attending:

POPI: Paulina Alvarado, Nikolay Nikolov

ECDC: Anne Schmitz, Beth Levy

Guests: Nadine Butler, Heather Rogers, Steve Bauer

I. Welcome and Introductions:

Board Vice-Chair Valerie Durrant welcomed members and guests.

II. Election of Officers:

Kim Plascjak, Chair of the Membership Committee, announced that nominations had been received for the positions of Board Chair and Vice-Chair. Valerie Durrant was nominated as Chair and Jayne Lura-Brown as Vice-Chair.

Kim Plascjak offered an opportunity for additional nominations. None were received. By a voice vote, the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair were filled by Valerie Durrant and Jayne Lura-Brown, respectively. Members congratulated the new officers and thanked the Membership Committee.

III. Presentation: NIH Child Care Subsidy Pilot Program:

Mr. Steve Bauer, Executive Director of the Federal Employees Assistance Association (FEEA) provided a comprehensive overview of the Federal Child Care Subsidy Program and the status of the NIH pilot program. Steve began with a presentation on the history and mission of FEEA. He reviewed the creation of the Federal Child Care Subsidy Program, originally called the Morella Bill, and the role that FEEA has played with the creation and growth of this program. FEEA currently administers the subsidy program for most of the participating Federal agencies.

In 2004, when NIH planned to begin the pilot, FEEA was chosen to administer the NIH program based on this experience.

Mr. Bauer provided data regarding the participation guidelines and activities of 20 other Federal agencies and discussed how NIH compared to other agency programs.

He shared with the group that NIH reached its capacity almost immediately upon the launch of the pilot in May 2005 and that NIH is the only federal agency with a waiting list for the subsidy program. Mary Ellen Savarese and Mr. Bauer discussed the unanticipated situation of the NIH program being fully subscribed in the first five months of the pilot due to participation of employees receiving the highest reimbursement rate, the number of employees with multiple children and the high cost of licensed child care in the Washington Metropolitan Region.

At the request of members, Mr. Bauer discussed his recommendations for a re-design of the NIH subsidy program that would provide more assistance to the lowest income employees and eliminate the 10% reimbursement level. There was discussion of the issue of an annual cap on funding of \$5000 per family and the maximum eligibility of \$60,000 annually. Additional discussion included lack of participation by wage grade employees (who may not be parents of young children), the idea of a monthly cap instead of an annual cap (to spread subsidy evenly throughout the year) and the need to have regular or automatic increases in program funds to cover wage and child care tuition increases.

Mr. Bauer shared information about other agencies revisions to the program and his opinion of the importance of this program in the changing Federal workforce. Based on current participation rates and trends in enrollment, Mr. Bauer projected that NIH would need \$250,000 in FY 07 to serve all current participants and the 14 employees currently on the waiting list. He also advised that if NIH eliminated the waiting list and advertised the program, we might realize the need for another \$50,000 due to pent up demand and needs of the NIH workforce. Using data from other Federal agencies, he would anticipate that NIH would have an optimum annual participation rate of 90 employees (#employees X .05 %).

The Board discussed the importance of the final recommendation regarding this program that should be delivered to Drs. Zerhouni and Kington by the end of this year. A Committee, chaired by Valerie Durrant, and whose members include Jayne Lura-Brown, Hank Primas, Richard Morris, Susan Persons and Mary Ellen Savarese will meet and draft a report for Board review at the December meeting. Susan Persons stated that data regarding costs of recruiting new employees or retention of current employees would be valuable. Richard Morris is aware of data available from workforce planning efforts and suggested that HR would be a source of data.

Steve Bauer offered to provide additional information and assistance if needed. The Board thanked Mr. Bauer for his willingness to travel to NIH from his office in Colorado and for his excellent presentation about this very complex and important program.

IV. Approve September Minutes:

Valerie Durrant asked for approval of the minutes of the September 9, 2006 meeting. The minutes were approved with minor corrections.

Dr. Durrant also announced that the Child Care Board Annual Report had been submitted for nomination of an NIH Plain Language Award. Jayne Lura-Brown was thanked for her speed and leadership of that effort.

V. Board Work Plan and Work Year:

Mary Ellen Savarese requested that members note the final version of the Work Plan and Board work schedule for the year. She mentioned that there would be a discussion of the Child Care Board Legislative Proposal with Patricia Brandt, Office of Legislative Policy, at the December meeting. Ms. Savarese hopes to schedule an overview of back-up child care for the January meeting. At the suggestion of members, she will invite Suburban Hospital and other agency representatives to attend that meeting.

VI. Discussion: New Ideas and Resources:

Valerie Durrant asked Board members to continue the discussion begun at the September meeting about new Board initiatives and approaches to problem solving. She asked Tom Hayden to expand upon his September comments about “thinking out of the box” as it relates to child care issues. Mr. Hayden asked the Board to consider services or program to serve those employees not currently served. How can the limited NIH resources be positioned to provide the broadest range of services? Mr. Hayden mentioned the important need for data and documentation in everything that goes on at NIH, especially in times of limited resources. The Board discussed the importance of communication with Institutes and other NIH organizations interested in the issues of employee recruitment and retention.

VII. Clarification of Ethics Issue:

Mary Ellen Savarese had been asked by a Board member if approval was needed for each voting Board member by their IC Ethics office. Valerie Bonham clarified that it was not needed, due to the fact that participation on the Board is approved as an official duty and application to the Board requires supervisory approval. There was additional discussion of how Board members could include Board participation as a non-critical element on personal performance plans in order to reinforce the importance of these duties and share information about their role with supervisors. Members discussed annual letters or reports of activity, etc. Richard Morris volunteered to draft language for the Board to consider. That language will be discussed at the December meeting.

VIII. Announcements:

- Angie Magliozzi announced that the 2007 Women’s Fair would be held on March 31.
- Susan Persons suggested that some children should visit Building One for Halloween. Mary Ellen will arrange.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM in order for Committees to meet and plan activities.

Next Board Meeting December 7, 2006 corrected 12/18/06